

Bad Writing, Bad Taste, Startling Disclosures

CIA

The Myth and the Madness

By Patrick J. McGarvey

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By THOMAS B. ROSS

NOTHING WOULD better serve the American people in their current stage of cynicism, paranoia and fear of repression than an honest book from inside the CIA. There have been a number of competent books by outsiders and a number of cover stories by insiders, notably Allen Dulles's *The Craft of Intelligence* and Lyman Kirkpatrick's *The Real CIA*. But no one yet has successfully shed the cloak as he turned in his dagger. Victor Marchetti, who rose to the top suite of the CIA only to quit in disillusionment, is trying to publish a book about his experiences. But the lower courts have upheld the agency's demand that it be suppressed and there is no guarantee that the Supreme Court, which ruled so narrowly in the case of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, will extend the First Amendment to an ex-CIA operative.

Into the breach comes Patrick J. McGarvey, a former intelligence officer of 14 years' service in the military, the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency. The fact that he has gotten into print might suggest that the CIA feels it has nothing to fear from him. And certain deletions in the advance-proofs indicate a degree of censorship or at least self-censorship. (Hold the page to the light and you can read through the inked crossovers—a familiar process recalling the Pentagon's decision to publish a censored version of the Pentagon Papers after the full text was in print. Foreign agents come see what we really think is sensitive.)

But McGarvey's book, though flawed—almost fatally so—by bad writing, bad taste and bad logic, contains several startling disclosures, allegations and horror stories: how the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended a retaliatory air strike against the Israeli naval base that launched the attack on the U.S. intelligence ship *Liberty* in the 1967 Middle East war; how CIA agents obtained a sample of urine from the men's room of a gambling casino in

Monte Carlo; how an investigation of the Pueblo fiasco turned up the fact that the Air Force had been flying a routine reconnaissance mission over Albania for 12 years, without purpose and without authorization; how a leper colony in North Vietnam was bombed on the advice of the CIA that it was an army headquarters; and how CIA psychologists rewarded Vietcong defectors by subjecting them to ghoulish experiments in which they were exposed to rapid changes in color, light and temperature.

McGarvey also lodges serious allegations against a number of important individuals and institutions. He contends that Richard M. Helms made his way to the top of the CIA by systematically destroying his competitors: Ray Cline, former deputy director for intelligence and now head of the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research; Admiral Rufus Taylor, Helms's former deputy; and Admiral William (Red) Rayborn, his predecessor. "I thought for a

time when I was director of the CIA," McGarvey quotes Rayborn as telling him, "that I might be assassinated by my deputy."

McGarvey also accuses Helms of blunting the investigative spirit of the major newspapers and magazines by taking their correspondents to lunch and keeping them happy with periodic leaks about other matters and other agencies.

He alleges further that Congress has given the CIA a veto over which senators and representatives are to be seated on the subcommittees that are supposed to serve as watchdogs on the agency's activities.

Against the obvious implication of many of his citations, McGarvey's thesis is that the crucial problem with the CIA is mismanagement, not an excess of

power and secrecy or a lack of accountability.

"CIA is not a ten-foot ogre," he writes. "It is merely a human institution badly in need of change. CIA is not the invisible government. Rather, it is a tired old whore that no one has the heart to take off the street."

Too much intelligence is collected, McGarvey argues, and too little is properly analyzed. There is less danger in the CIA's excursions into sabotage and subversion, he contends, than in the insatiable electronic search that put the U-2, the *Liberty* and the Pueblo in extremis.

His recommendations for change are rather forlorn. He concedes that Congress has abdicated its responsibility, the so-called oversight committees sitting mute through Helms's annual "lantern slide show," wilfully ignorant of how

much is being spent on intelligence and where, never informed before or after the fact about covert operations. Yet McGarvey's cure is the weary old recommendation: write your congressman—the one, perhaps, who is telling Helms he'd rather not know what's going on lest he have to assume responsibility.

I fear we must await a more compelling book before the establishment is moved to reform itself. The Supreme Court willing, Marchetti may provide it for us. It does not seem too much to ask that he be able to use his CIA experience to inform the people, when the three ex-CIA agents of the Watergate bust-in (or were they, too, just on loan for the campaign?) can apply their agency-imparted expertise to subvert the political process of a supposedly free nation.

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